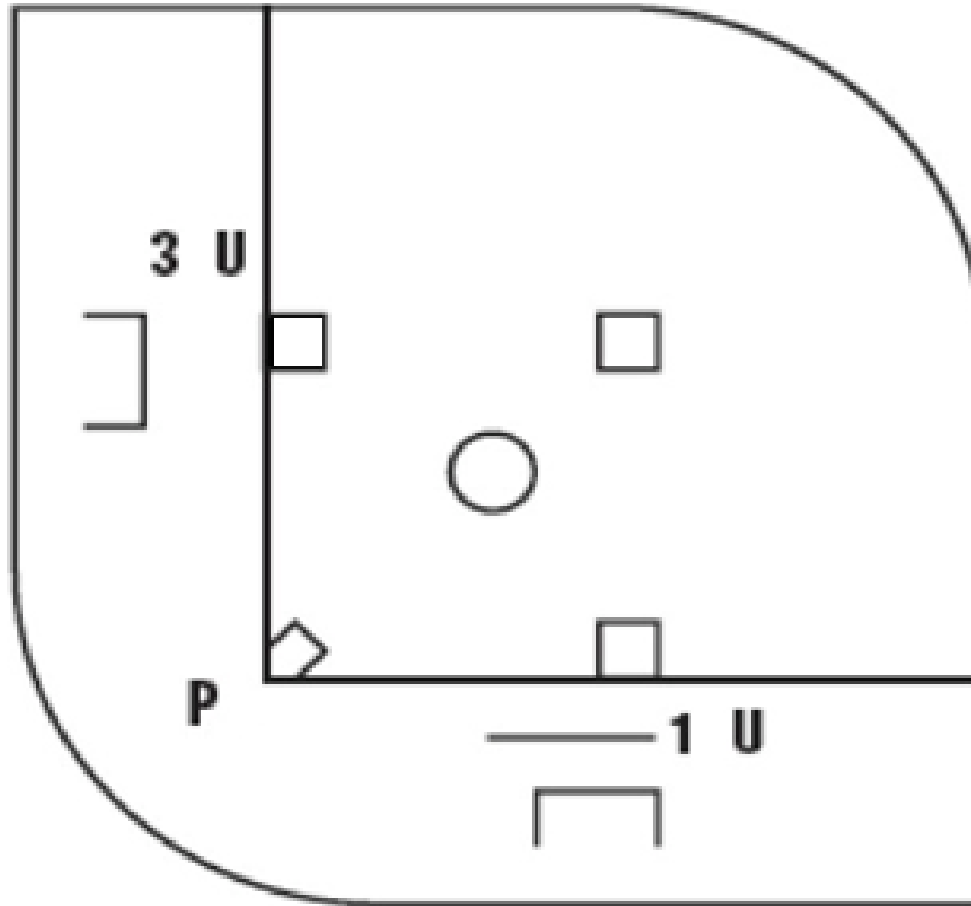


# 3 Man Softball Umpire Mechanics



# Three Umpire System

The three umpire system is a wonderful system to work. It provides many luxuries and advantages over the two umpire system. There are times, especially at third base, where the umpire may need to take only one or two steps to get the best position. Learn each position. Use disciplined and controlled movements.

Know why you move and make all your moves efficient.

The umpire closest to the interference or obstruction is responsible for calling it. Before EVERY pitch, remind yourself of and prepare yourself for, what you will do on the next batted ball or the next play.

## **Ask yourself in advance:**

What is my area of fly ball coverage?

Where do I go if my partner chases?

Where do I go on a hit to the infield?

Where do I go on a hit to the outfield?

Where do I go on a pick-off or steal?

# General Rules of the Three Man System

For NJSIAA purposes, a field umpire **goes out only if necessary**

If you deviate, you must communicate

If you go out you must communicate

If you go out, you stay out until the play is completely over and time is called

Unless an umpire goes out down a line,  
the plate umpire will call all fair/foul balls

The umpire that lands up home is the one who calls time

You move in a clockwise position

Always practice the “Safety valve” method while moving in rotation

Eye contact must be made and when play is over,  
officials will hustle back to their positions simultaneously

The third base umpire brushed off the pitchers plate with  
his/her back toward the outfield

Runners are “boxed in “, with few exceptions

Unless an umpire goes out, the plate official has no tag up responsibilities

The plate umpire has no responsibility in calling a runner  
leaving too soon on a pitch

# Starting Positions

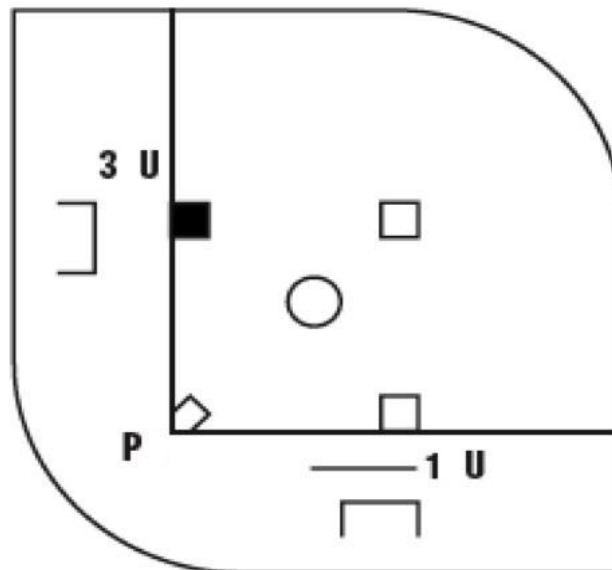
## THREE UMPIRE MECHANICS

### A Quick Study of the Basics

#### Starting Positions

There are only three different positions you will ever be in at the start of the pitch

1. Standard position
2. Rotated position
3. Counter-rotated position



# Starting Positions

## I. Standard Starting Position

**A.** Use when there are no runners on

**P:** behind the plate.

**1U & 3U:** 18-20 feet down and close to the line, completely in foul territory in an upright, standing position.

As the pitch is delivered, 1U and 3U take no more than two steps forward, ending in a ready-set position or on the proper push foot (the outside foot).

Standard

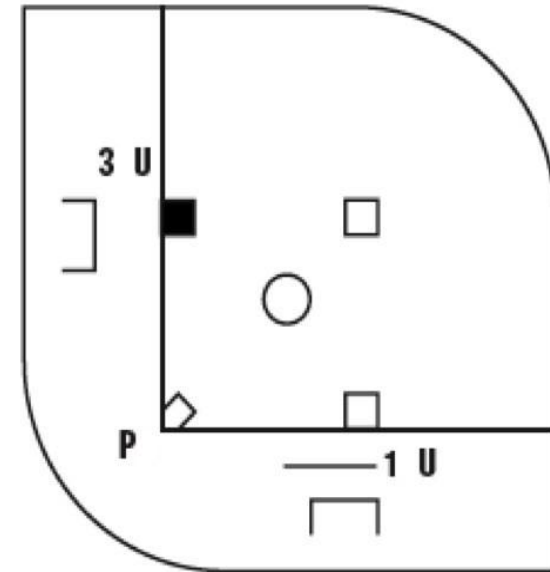
**B.** Use when there is a runner on third base only

Standard

**P:** behind the plate.

**1U:** 18-20 feet down and close to the line completely in foul territory in an upright standing position OR in a set position. If standing, as the pitch is delivered, take no more than two steps forward, ending in a ready-set position or on the proper push foot (the outside foot).

**3U:** in a set position 8-10 feet down the line, completely in foul territory. 3U is facing the plate and may be a step or so perpendicularly off the line.



# Starting Positions

## 2. Rotated Starting Position

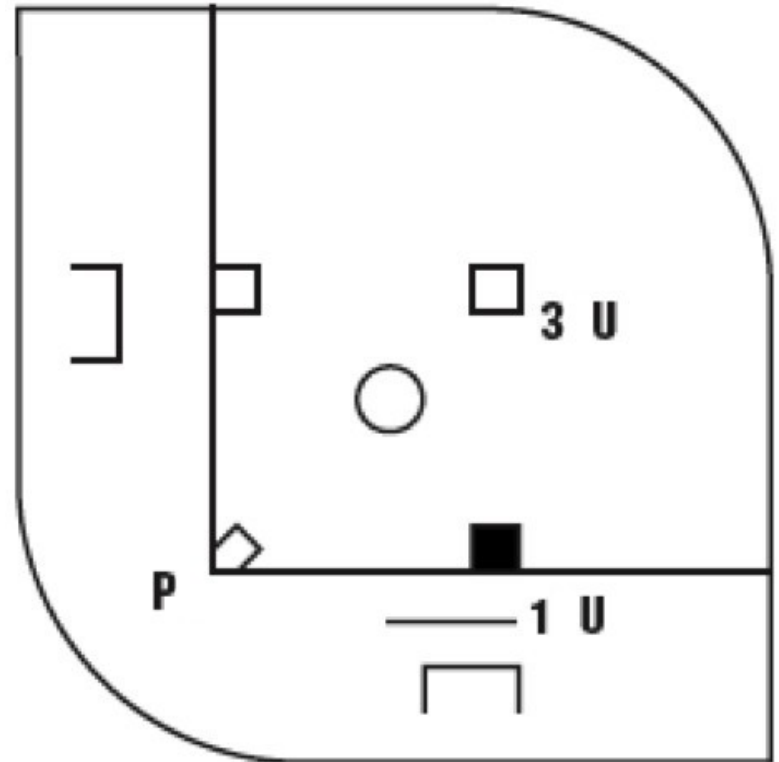
**A.** Use when there is a runner on first base only

**P:** behind the plate.

**1U:** in a set position 8-10 feet down and on the line, completely in foul territory, facing the plate.

**3U:** facing the plate in a set position 10-12 feet beyond second base on an imaginary line extending straight out towards right-center field from second base

Rotated



# Counter-rotated Starting Position

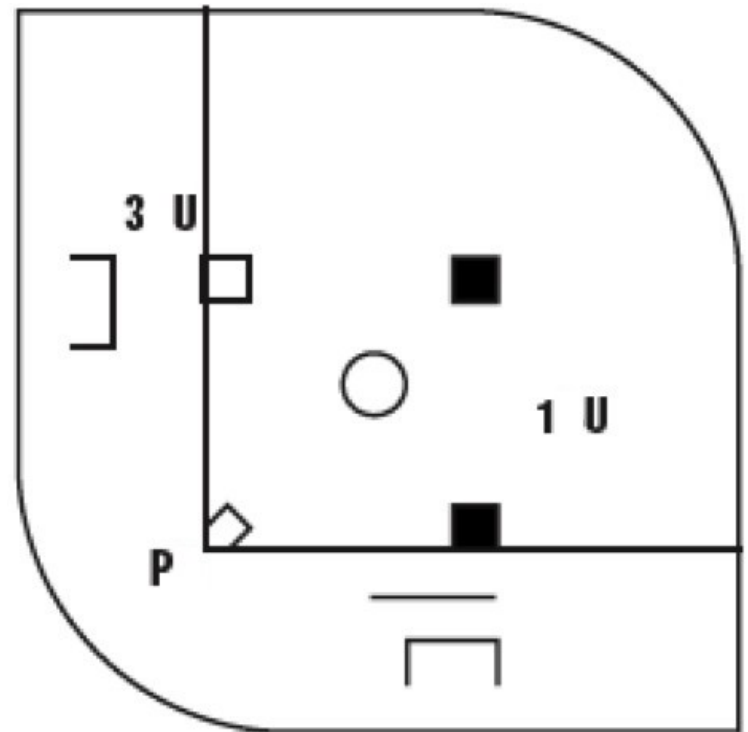
**A.** Use in every situation other than no one on, runner on first only or runner on third only as in 1 and 2 above

**PU:** behind the plate

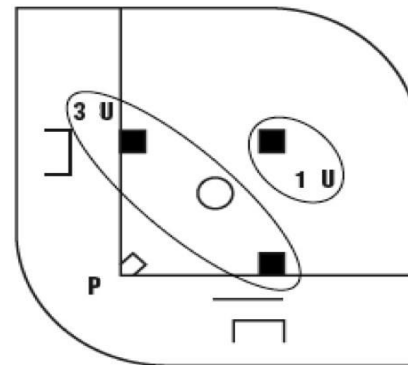
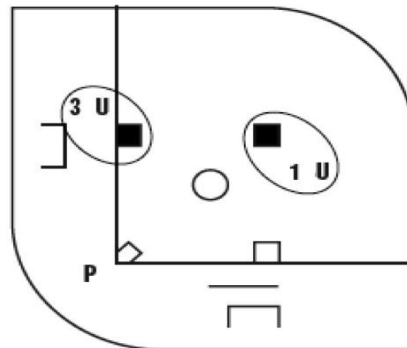
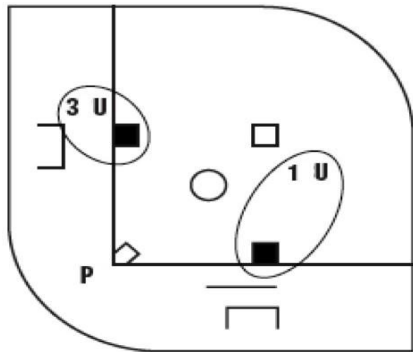
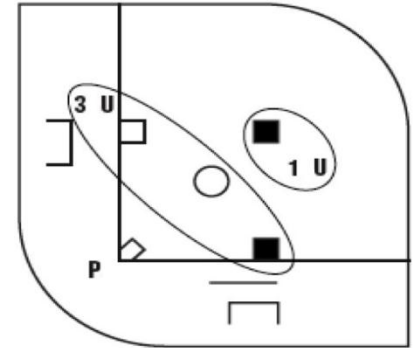
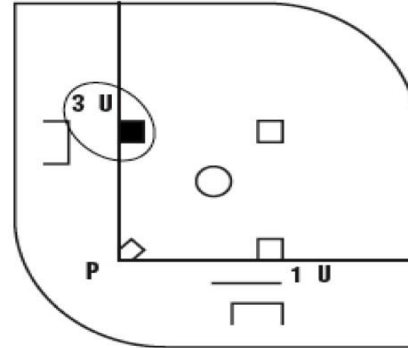
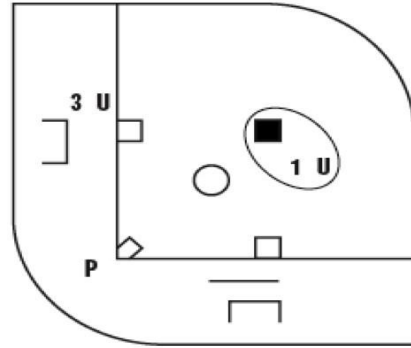
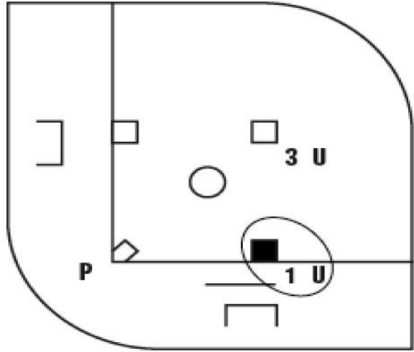
**1U:** in a set position somewhere in the 30 feet between 15 feet from first base and 15 feet from second base, usually behind the second baseman, and optimally, no more than 15 feet from the baseline and facing the plate.

**3U:** facing the plate in a set position 8-12 feet (depending on where the runners are) down and on the line from third base.

With a runner on third, 3U may be a few steps perpendicularly off the line but still facing the plate.  
In this starting position, there is no rotation during the play.



# Umpire Responsibilities for Runners Leaving Before the Pitch is Released



Between innings the base umpires stand about 15 feet off the line in fair territory beyond 1st & 3rd bases at about the grass, facing home plate.

The plate umpire stays within 15 feet of home plate usually facing the team that is coming to bat.



# How and When Umpires Rotate

Umpires always rotate in a clockwise motion

1. Full Rotation
2. Partial Rotation

## 1. Full Rotation

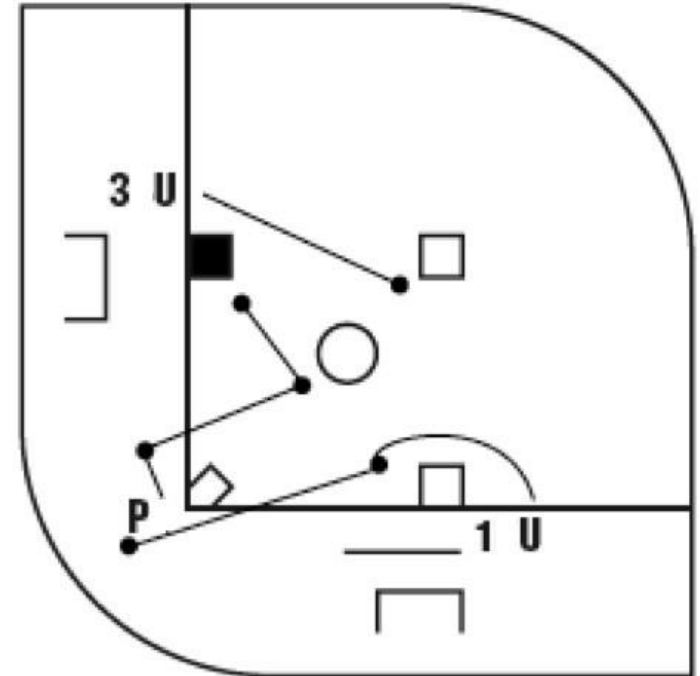
**A.** Use when in the Standard Starting Position with no one on

**P:** move out to in front of the pitching circle and as the runner approaches second base, move to a primary position 8-10 feet from third base.

**1U:** pivot inside the diamond 10 feet beyond the baseline and about 10 feet away from the foul line. See the batterrunner

touch first base. When the runner advances beyond second base, move to a point-of-the-plate holding position at home. Adjust to the play.

**3U:** move straight into the diamond to a primary position 8-10 feet from second base. When 1U rotates to the plate, 3U is responsible for all plays at first or second.



# How and When Umpires Rotate

**B.** Use when in the Standard Starting Position with a runner on third only

**AND THAT RUNNER WILL SCORE WITH NO PLAY ON HER/HIM** – if there is ANY

chance of a play at 3rd, 3U must stay there and 1U must take BR to 2nd.

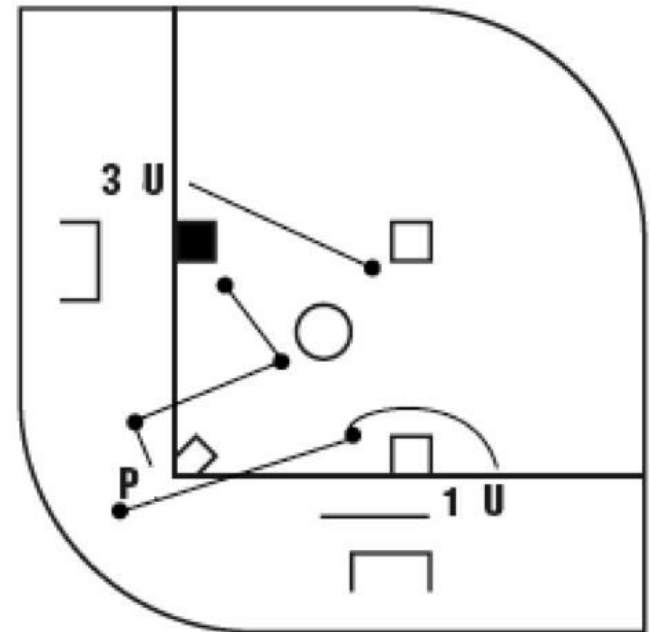
**P:** see R3 touch home, then move out to in front of the pitching circle and as the BR approaches second base, move to a primary position 8-10 feet from third base.

**1U:** pivot inside the diamond 10 feet beyond the baseline and about 10 feet away from the foul line.

See BR touch first.

When the BR advances beyond second base, move to a point-of-the-plate holding position at home. Adjust to play.

**3U:** move straight into the diamond to a primary position 8-10 feet from second base. When 1U rotates to the plate, 3U is responsible for all plays at first or second.



# Partial Rotation – Only the P and I U Rotate

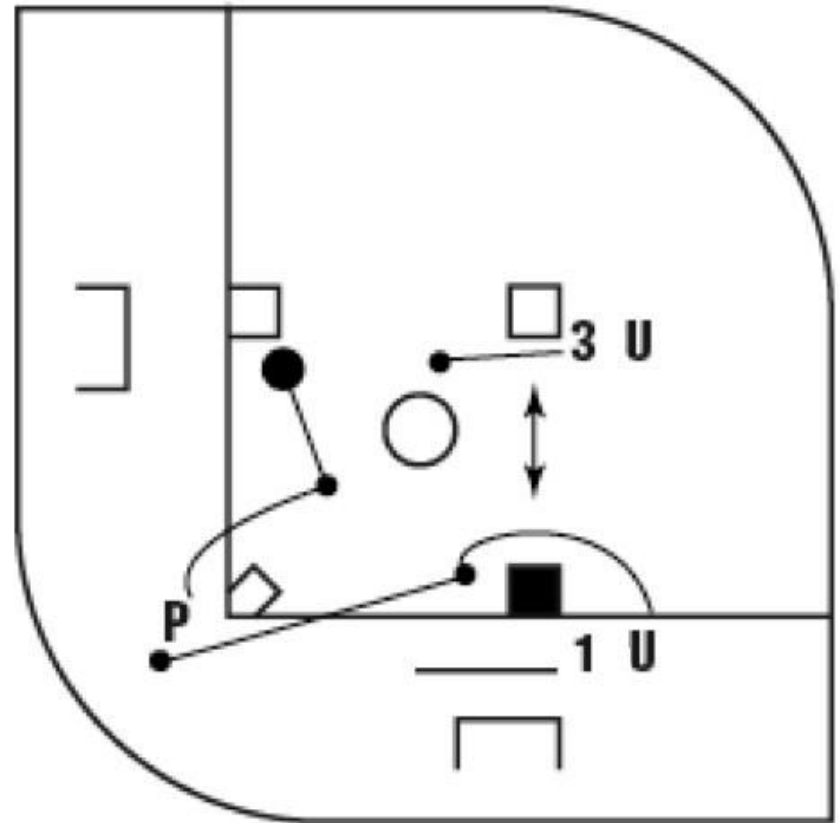
A. Use when in the Rotated Starting Position

**No umpire is ever part of a rotation if his/her starting position is off the line**

**PU:** move out towards the pitching circle and as the R1 approaches second base, move to a primary position 8-10 feet from third base.

**1U:** pivot inside the diamond 10 feet beyond the baseline and about 10 feet away from the foul line. See BR touch first. When R1 advances beyond second base, move to a point-of-the-plate holding position at home. Adjust to play.

**3U:** pivot inside the diamond to a primary position 8-10 feet from second base and see R1 touch second. When 1U rotates to the plate, 3U is responsible for all plays at first and second.



# Fly Ball Coverage - Chasing

## I. From the Standard Starting Position

### Chase when:

Ball is close to fence

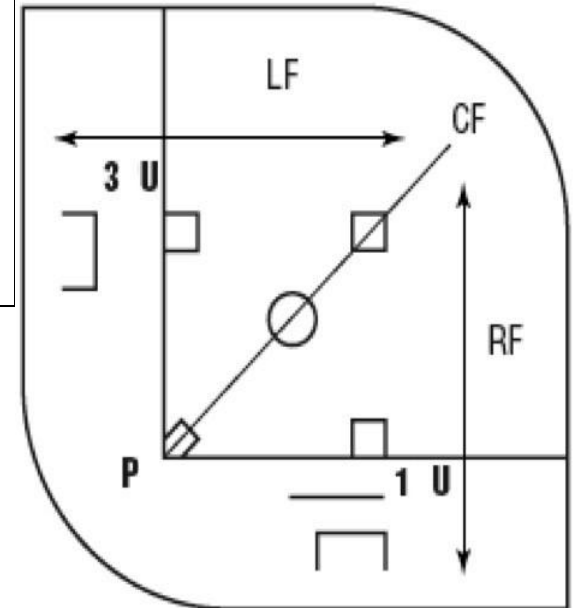
More than one fielder is going for the ball

It looks like trouble:

Short Hop

Back Pedaling

Diving



# Fly Ball Coverage - Chasing

## 2. From the Rotated Starting Position

### Chase when:

Ball is close to fence

More than one fielder is going for the ball

It looks like trouble:

Short hop

Back pedaling

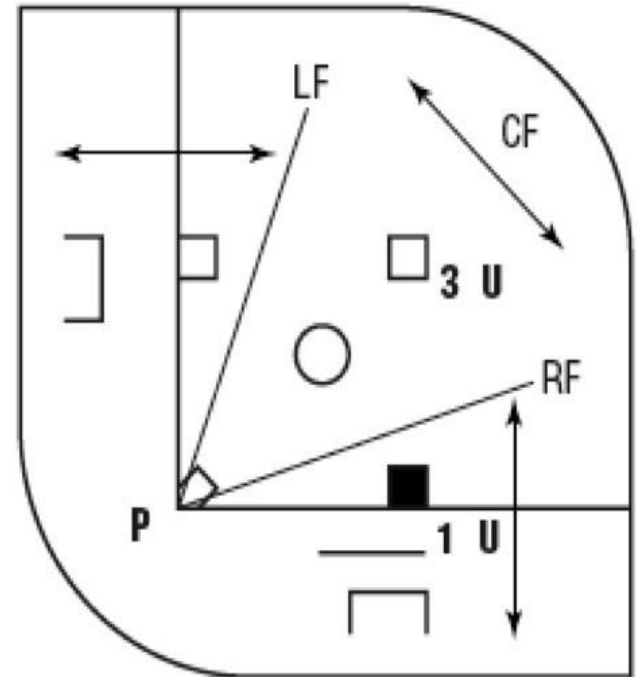
Diving

Chase parallel to the flight (path) of the ball

**UNLESS** you will need to judge fair/foul.

If you will need to judge fair/foul, chase down the line.

Always be stopped to see the catch/no catch and to render your judgment.



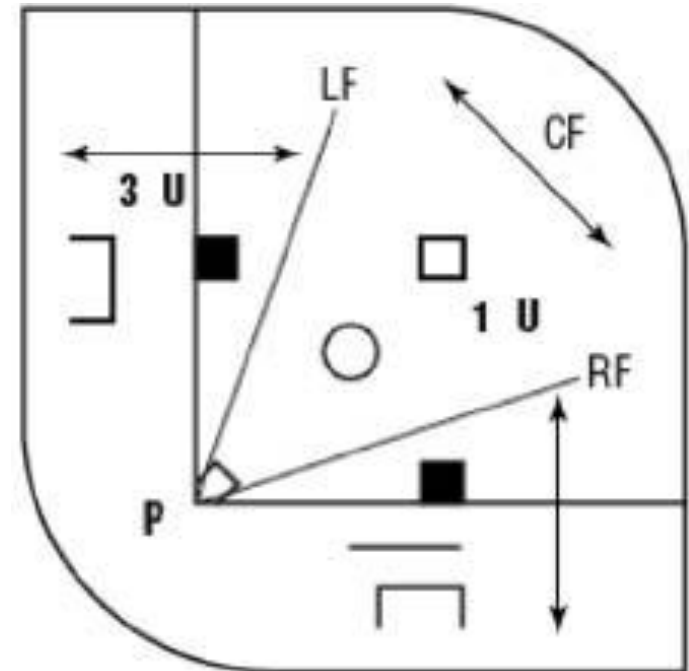
# Fly Ball Coverage - Chasing

## 3. From the Counter-rotated Starting Position








When an umpire chases, we are working with two umpires. Usually, but not always, we revert to the two umpire system.

For instance, when 1U chases with no one on, P covers 1st and 3U rotates into 2nd. When the BR advances to 2nd, P goes back to the plate and 3U takes the runner to 3rd if needed.

In this starting position, there is no rotation during the play.



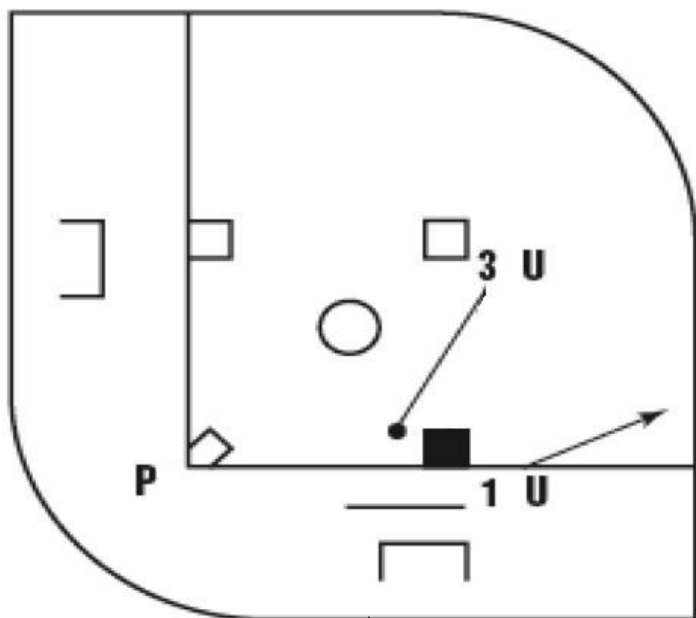
# Tag Up Responsibilities When NO Umpire Chases

Runner on First		1U has the tag-up at first
Runner on Second		1U has the tag-up at second
Runner on Third		3U has the tag-up at third
Runners on First and Second		1U has tag-up at first 3U has tag-up at second
Runners on First and Third		1U has tag-up at first 3U has tag-up at third
Runners on Second and Third		1U has tag-up at second 3U has tag-up at third
Bases Loaded		1U has tag-ups at first & second 3U has tag-up at third

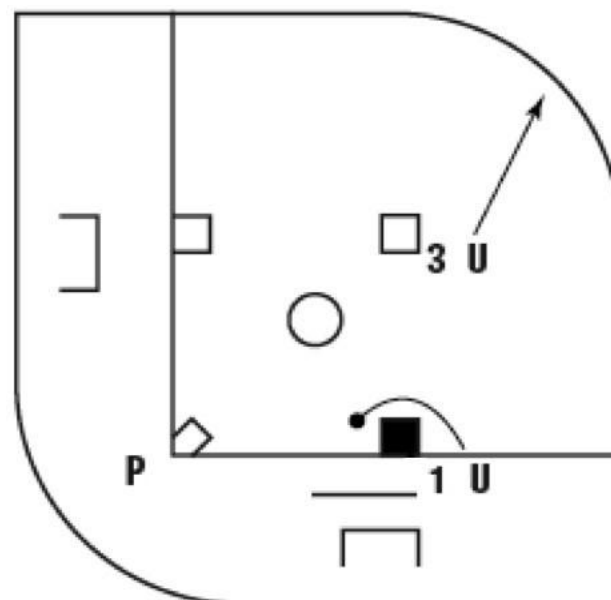
**NOTE: Plate Umpire has no tag-up responsibilities if no umpire chases**

# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

Runner on 1st only



1U Chases  
3U has 1st

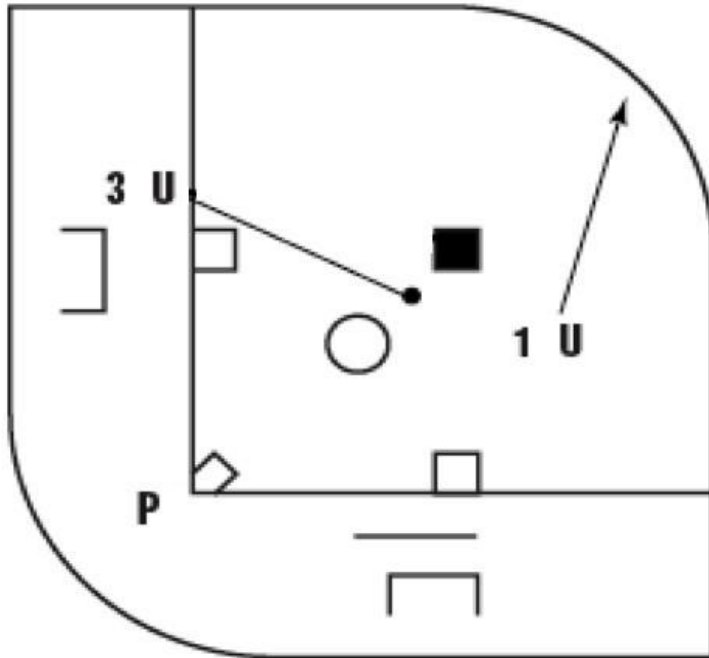


3U Chases  
1U has 1st

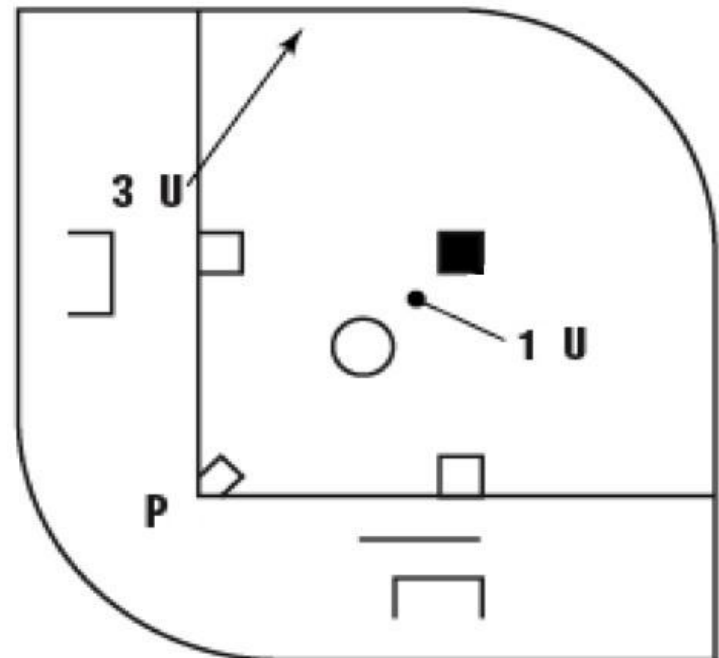


# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

Runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> only



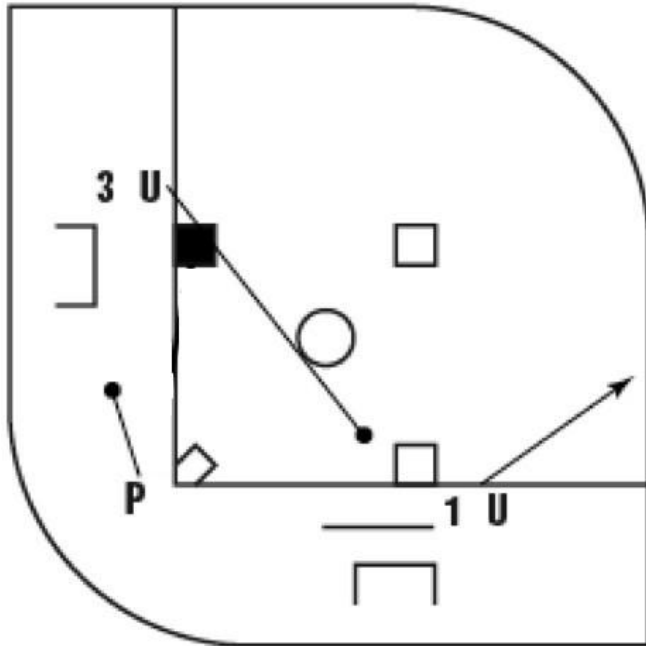
1U Chases  
3U has 2nd



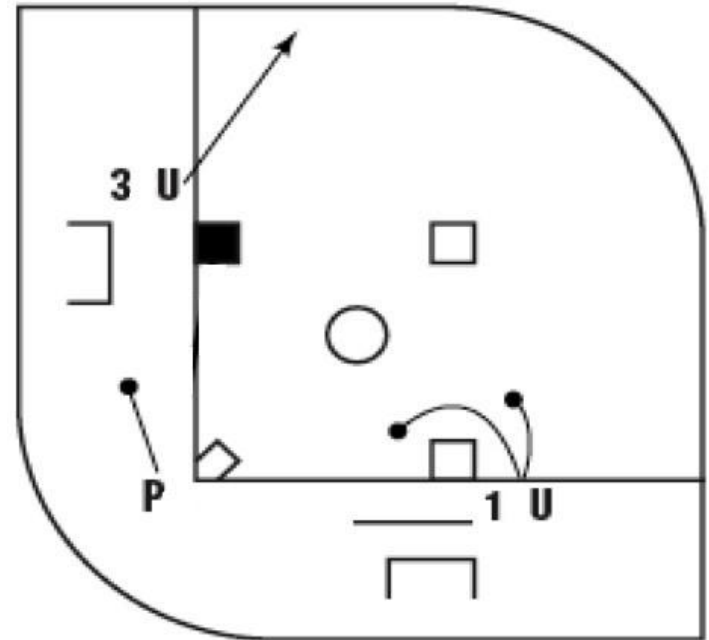
3U Chases  
1U has 2nd

# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

Runner on 3rd only



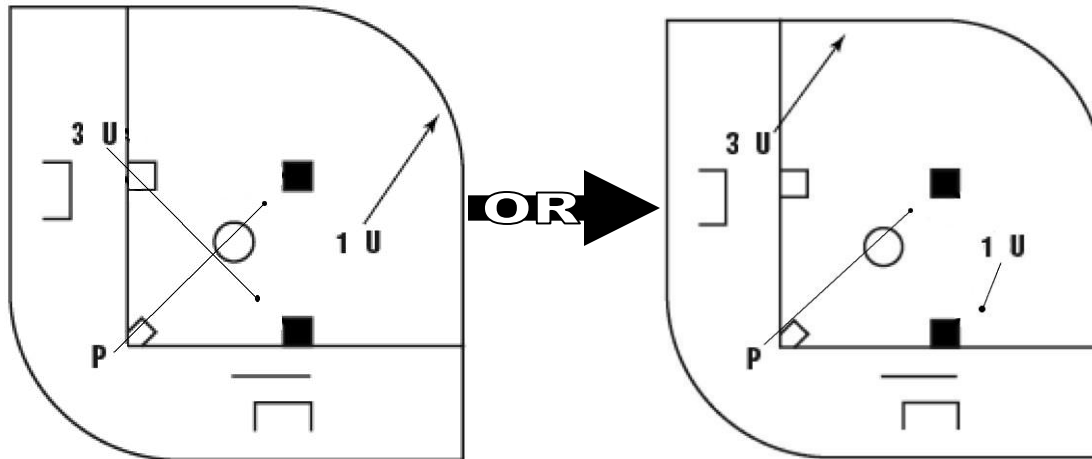
1U Chases  
3U has 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>  
P has 3rd



3U Chases  
1U has 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>  
P has 3rd

# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2nd



1U chases

P has tag-up at 2nd

3U has tag-up at 1st

**OR**

3U chases

**P** has tag-up at 2nd

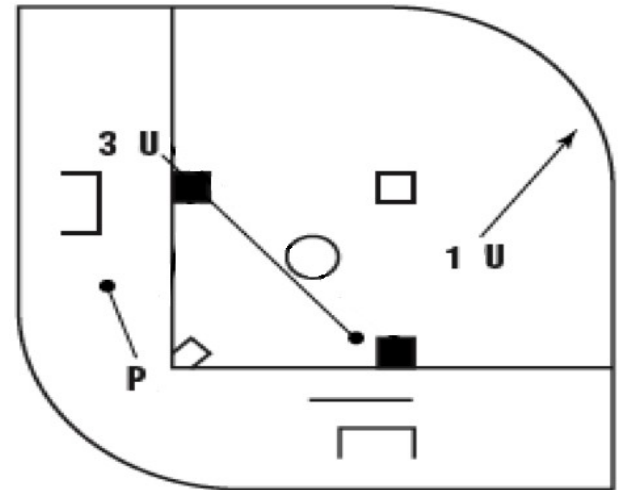
1U has tag-up at 1st

Runner on 2nd only

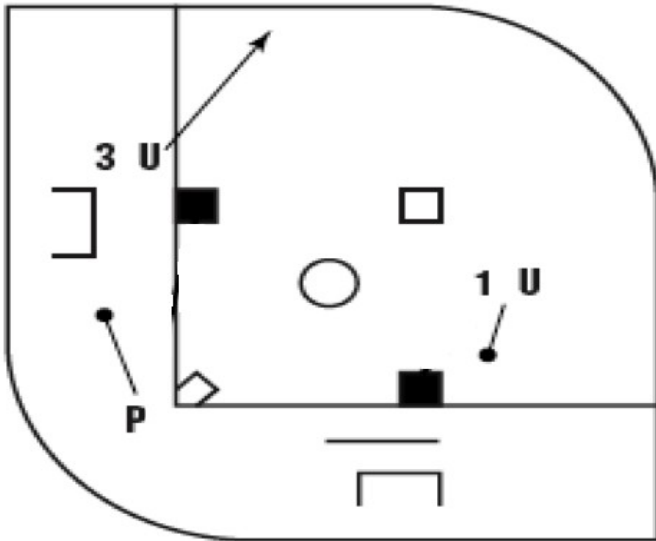
# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

1U Chases  
P has 3<sup>rd</sup>  
3U has 1<sup>st</sup>



3U Chases  
P has 3<sup>rd</sup>  
1U has 1<sup>st</sup>

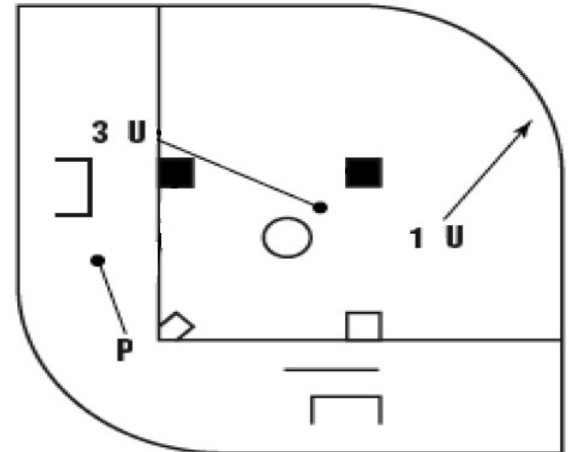


**NOTE: 3U NEVER has a tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup> if 1U chases**

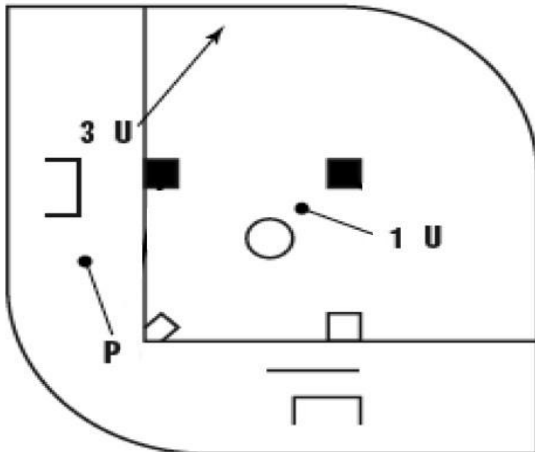
# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

Runners on 2nd & 3rd

1U Chases  
P has 3rd  
3U has 2nd



3U Chases  
P has 3rd  
1U has 2nd

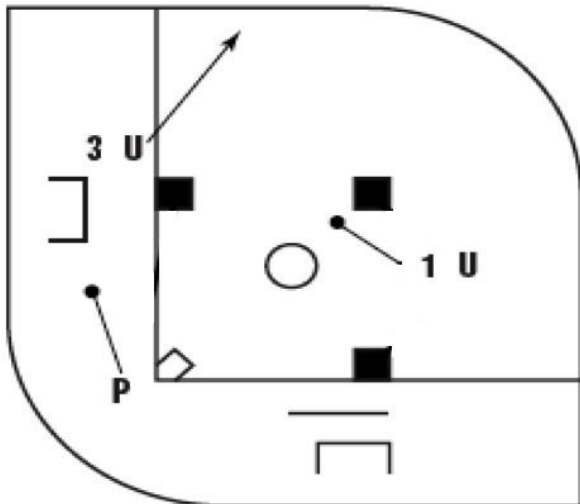
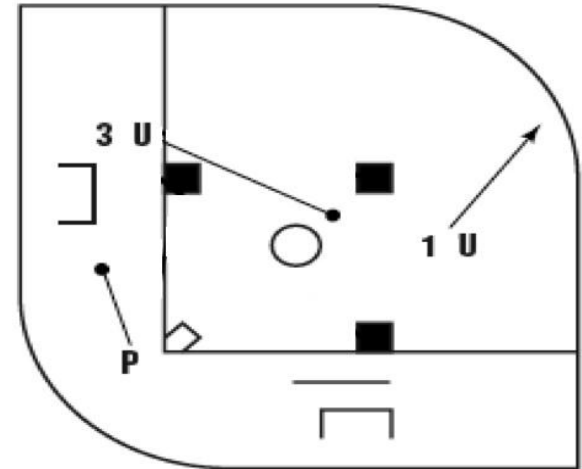


**NOTE: 3U NEVER has a tag-up at 3rd if 1U chases**

# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases

## Bases Loaded

1U Chases  
P has 3rd  
3U has 1st & 2nd



3U Chases  
P has 3rd  
1U has 1st & 2nd

**NOTE: 3U NEVER has a tag-up at 3rd if 1U chases**

# Between Innings Position

After the third out, 3U brushes off the pitcher's plate, unless 3U chased on the last play, then 1U brushes off the pitcher's plate.

Between innings the base umpires stand about 15 feet off the line in fair territory beyond 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> bases at about the grass, facing home plate.

The plate umpire stays 15 to 20 feet from home plate facing the infield on the side of the team entering on defense.